

jo THE CRITIC AS ARTIST

over rearing steeds: the gods seated at the feast
 or then- miracles: the heroes in their victory or in
 then: pain.
 Sometimes he would etch in thin vermilion lines
 upon a ground
 of white the languid bridegroom and his bride,
 with Eros
 hovering round them — an Eros like one of
 Donatello's angels,
 a little laughing thing with gilded or with azure
 wings. On the
 curved side he would write the name of his friend.
 KAAOS

AAKIBIAAHS or KAAOS XAPMIAHS tells us the
 story of his
 days. Again, on the rim of the wide flat cup he
 would draw
 the stag browsing, or the Hon at rest, as his
 fancy willed
 it. From the tiny perfume-bottle laughed
 Aphrodite at her
 toflet, and, with bare-limbed Msenads in his train,
 Dionysus
 danced round the wine-jar on naked must-stained
 feet, while,
 satyr-like, the old Silenus sprawled upon the
 bloated skins, or
 shook that magic spear which was tipped with a
 fretted fir-
 cone, and wreathed with dark ivy. And no one
 came to trouble
 the artist at his work. No irresponsible chatter
 disturbed him.
 He was not worried by opinions. By the Ilyssus,
 says Arnold
 somewhere, there was no Higginbotham. By the
 Ilyssus, my
 dear Gilbert, there were no silly art congresses
 bringing pro-
 vincialism to the provinces and teaching the
 mediocrity how to
 mouth. By the Ilyssus there were no tedious
 magazines about
 art, in which the industrious prattle of what they
 do not understand. On the reed-grown banks of that little
 stream strutted
 no ridiculous journalism monopolizing the seat of
 judgment
 when it should be apologizing in <jthe dock. The
 Greeks had
 no art-critics. * >k • > ^ 5 ' | t '
 Gilbert. Ernest, you are quite delightful, out
 your views are
 terribly unsound. I am afraid that you have been
 listening to
 the conversation of some one older than
 yourself. That is
 always a dangerous thing to do, and if you allow it
 to degenerate
 into a habit you will find it absolutely fatal to any
 intellectual
 development. As for modern journalism, it is not
 my business
 to defend it. It justifies its own existence by the
 great Dar-
 winian principle of the survival of the
 vulgarest. I have
 merely to do with literature. Qef * ^ ^ 0

read. That^j2«p*J5^h regard to your
 statement that
 the GreeksJwr^o a^ri^frM assure you that is:
 quite absurd.
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Ernest. But what is the difference between,
 literature and